

Issaquah School District, High School #4, Elementary School #17, SDP/MSP Submittal:

Project Narrative:

Site Overview: Issaquah School District, High School No. 4 and Elementary School No. 17 sit on 40.79 acres of the former Providence Heights College. The site perimeter is heavily wooded with a large clearing in the middle. This property fronts 228th Ave SE and borders Issaquah and Sammamish. In January 2020, the site was rezoned to Community Facilities – Facility (CF-F), which is compatible with public school zoning. The neighboring Providence Point retirement community borders the property to north, west and south and is a mix of single family residences, apartments and condominiums with several larger scale community facilities such as a Clubhouse, Indoor Pool, Café, Apartment building, Fitness Center and tennis courts. Beyond Providence Point, lies single-family residential developments with retail and Pine Lake Middle School to the north.

Main access to the schools, off 228th, is from a new entry boulevard that meanders through the trees, climbs up roughly 100' of elevation, with terraced retaining walls on either side, and arrives at the top of the campus at an intersection with baseball and softball fields to the right, a drive to the left to the High School for parent drop-off, student and staff parking, or straight to the Elementary School. School buses continue straight (west) to serve the Elementary School and south student entry of the High School. This main boulevard is defined by plantings (both of seasonal interest and buffer character), pedestrian sidewalks, pedestrian scale site lighting and vistas to the schools.

Site access was carefully considered to provide a safe distance from adjacent intersections, preserve existing trees and minimize site grading. Site improvements along 228th are anticipated including a traffic signal at the entry drive. Current traffic studies support a single entry access for students, staff, parent drop-off and buses while maintaining the existing southern entry for emergency vehicle access only. Traffic analysis also supports projected required parking counts for the Elementary School, High School and Stadium.

Site Design Overview: The site design takes its cues from the early site development and site character. In 1936 the site was heavily forested with a patchwork of clearings. In 1959, when the site was developed for Providence Heights College, a larger central clearing was introduced with a forested perimeter. The master site plan proposal maintains the idea of a forested perimeter with a mix of older and new growth plantings throughout the campus. It expands on the central clearing to include space for the schools and athletic fields.

Taking inspiration from the existing woodland vegetation and rugged topography on site, the design team proposes introducing flexible outdoor gathering spaces defined by elements that are consistent with regional examples in the Issaquah Alps, such as, trailheads, rocky outcrops, forest clearings and woodland meadows. The gathering spaces are planned to include natural elements (boulders and stumperies) and constructed features (concrete seat walls and decorative paving) with a planting palette of native plants and grasses.

As part of the design the project team looked for ways to preserve the existing views from the site in accordance with Central Issaquah Design Standard Chapter 11.2.G, which is required under IMC 18.07.480(E)(1)(b). As part of this work it was noted that while there are scenic views of treed hillsides no views of any nearby mountains are available. The project has provided view vistas in areas to allow users to experience the natural environment as part of their site experience. One example of this is the overlook at the south end of the elementary school over the existing wetland. Other locations are shown on the view vista diagram provided with the land use submittal.

Retaining as many existing trees as possible is a priority with several large expanses saved along the site perimeter. Larger, significant stands around the existing wetland in the southwest corner of the project and along 228th are also maintained. In areas where grading is proposed to accommodate program elements and tree retention is not possible, reforestation planting is proposed to the extent feasible. Retaining walls are softened with climbing vines, large shrubs, and trees where appropriate, and large planted berms are provided to buffer neighboring properties in strategic locations.

The site will also include surface and structured parking areas, track and field for co-ed sports and physical education classes with a covered grandstand, softball and baseball fields, tennis courts, and an Elementary School covered play structure. Pedestrian connections throughout the site is an important element that ties the campus together.

Building Overview: Building siting takes advantage of the large clearing at the top of the campus, preserves as many trees and natural features as possible around the site perimeter and provides ample vehicular queueing to both schools.

The approximately 226,500 sf High School is designed to serve 1,600 students in grades 9-12. The approximately 71,300 sf elementary school will serve 600 students in grades K-5. The high school includes general use classrooms, library, commons, food services, performing arts center, gymnasium with auxiliary gyms, locker rooms with fitness and activity rooms, career technical education rooms, and supporting administrative spaces. The elementary school includes general use classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, music and supporting administrative spaces. In subsequent phases of work, portables are anticipated to be added to both schools and an addition added to the High School.

Architecturally, both schools are three story in height to minimize their footprint and site impacts. Distinct programmatic features, such as linear classroom wings, large glassy commons, gymnasiums and libraries allow the building massing to be varied which also creates intimate outdoor play and gathering spaces. Similar in design vernacular, both schools provide covered entrances into lofty glass lobbies. Classroom wings span east to west to take advantage of daylighting and offer operable windows. Connections to the outdoors is important and purposeful providing direct access to playgrounds, exterior educational spaces and athletic plazas. These sustainable design strategies, and many others, inform much our design decisions in both schools, with the high school meeting and exceeding the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP) requirements.

Design Challenges: The site lies outside of the Central Issaquah Neighborhoods, however, many of the guidelines outlined in the Central Issaquah Plan have influenced our site planning and building decisions. Following the definition of Compact Schools, we have created a pedestrian friendly campus that preserves many of the natural areas and trees, offers plazas for outdoor play and study, and maintains a

pedestrian-friendly scale around the buildings. Structured parking provides stalls for 50% of the required spaces.

Parking: Parking requirements, per Code, for the Elementary School indicates a need for (96) stalls for everyday school use and (117) stalls for special events in the Cafeteria and Gym. Current plan shows providing (103) parking stalls For the High School, Code requires (421) stalls for everyday school use and the current plan shows providing (564) stalls. The stadium seats 2,000 and requires (667) spaces, per Code. Shared Elementary School (104 stalls) and High School parking stalls (564 stalls) accommodates this need with a total of (668) stalls, leaving room for school buses at the Elementary School and High School. The School District does not intend to host events at the Elementary School, High School and Stadium at the same time.

Floor Area Ratio: Recently adopted amendments to the City of Issaquah, Land Use Code, for Compact Schools offers interesting site planning challenges to meet the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirement. A .75 FAR is required yet difficult to achieve as noted in the attached AAS asking for a 25% reduction in this standard. See attached AAS for additional information.